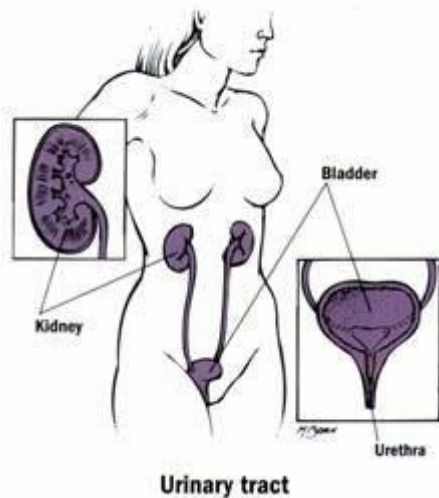


Most **urinary tract infections** are caused by bacteria. Any part of your urinary tract can become infected. The urinary tract includes the kidneys, ureters, bladder and urethra. Bladder infections are the most common.



The signs of a bladder infection include: burning with urination, urinary urgency and/or frequency. Nausea, lower back pain, and fever may be signs of a kidney infection.

Women tend to have urinary tract infections more often than men because bacteria can reach the bladder more easily in women. The urethra is shorter in women than in men, so bacteria have a shorter distance to travel. The urethra is also located near the rectum in women. Bacteria from the rectum can easily travel up the urethra and cause infections.

Having sex may also cause urinary tract infections in women because bacteria can be pushed into the urethra. Using a diaphragm can lead to infections because diaphragms push against the urethra and make it harder to completely empty the bladder. The urine that stays in the bladder is more likely to grow bacteria and cause infections.

If your healthcare provider thinks you have a bladder infection, they will test a sample of your urine and prescribe an antibiotic for you if you have an infection. Usually, symptoms of the infection go away 1 to 2 days after you start taking the medicine. Your provider may also suggest a medicine to numb your urinary tract and make you feel better while the antibiotic starts to work. The medicine colors your urine bright orange, so don't be alarmed by the color when you urinate.

If you have urinary tract infections often talk with your healthcare provider about what changes would be helpful for you. Your provider also may give you a low dose of medicine for several months or longer to prevent infections from coming back. If having sex seems to cause your infections, your provider may suggest that you take a single antibiotic pill after you have sex to prevent urinary tract infections.